

Discussion Paper - Environment

Creating a vision for Bass Coast

Thinking about how our community, our towns and villages and our environment is changing, how often have you said, “Wouldn’t it be great if ...”? Well, now is the perfect time to share those thoughts with the rest of the Bass Coast community through Bass Coast Shire Council’s Guiding Bass Coast Towards 2030 Vision program.

What do you like most about living in Bass Coast?. What is so special that you would like it protected for future generations and what would you like to see changed? Tell us what drew you to Bass Coast and what keeps you here.

Council wants to develop a shared view with the community about what Bass Coast should look like in 2030.

As well, we will need to think about some of the national and global issues such as what do we need as our population ages, about the impacts of climate change and the impact of change in telecommunications. How can Council and community groups show leadership and influence other decision-makers in these areas?

It is important for as many people as possible to have their say. The more feedback Council collects, the better understanding Council will gain on what the community sees as essential to a sustainable and diverse Shire.

How does this help in the formation of the vision? Your ideas will be the starting point for developing a shared view of the long-term priorities for Bass Coast.

The priorities will be a key reference point for the Council, community and other levels of government in planning and decision-making.

Discussion papers have been prepared for a number of themes outlining challenges and opportunities. These aim to inform and encourage discussion and debate. The themes are: the environment, the built environment, lifestyle, local economy and leadership.

This paper focuses on the theme of environment.

The Environment

Reflecting on our present – imagining our future

Bass Coast is predominantly a coastal Shire with a unique coastline complemented by a highly productive agricultural land. The two major industries are tourism and agriculture.

We value this natural environment as it enhances our quality of life, personal health, economic activity and social wellbeing.

The “sea change” population growth, combined with the continuing appeal of Bass Coast for holiday makers, is resulting in increased pressure on urban areas to expand and placing a greater demand on community facilities and infrastructure.

This growth will impact on the natural areas and values that the local community and visitors treasure and appreciate. How will we ensure that these areas and values are protected, managed and enhanced into the future?

A preliminary community survey, Your Vision for Bass Coast, conducted by Council between November 2007 and January 2008, confirmed the Shire’s coastal identity, with respondents overwhelmingly selecting the beach and coastal environment as the “thing” they most liked about living in the Bass Coast area.

The survey also identified a number of challenges facing Bass Coast's environment. When asked what would make Bass Coast an ideal place to live for the next generation, the key responses were:

- Protection of the natural environment;
- o Finding the balance between urban development and its impact;
- o Conservation of indigenous plants and animals;
- Water conservation; and
- Waste disposal management.

The Council's draft Environment Sustainability Plan highlights some other priority issues that need to be considered:

- Climate change and the efficient use of resources;
- Clean productive agriculture; and
- Managing pollution, litter and stormwater quality to minimise pollution on the waterways and beaches in Bass Coast.

Please have your say about Bass Coast's environment in 2030

Now Council is looking to take the process to the next step, with Guiding Bass Coast Towards 2030. Council is very interested in your point of view and wants your comments and feedback. Thought provoking questions include:

- Describe how you think Bass Coast should look like in 2030?
- What must we preserve for our children and their children?
- What are our most valuable environmental assets?

There are a number of ways for you to have a say. They are:

- Call Ella at the Vision Information Desk on (03) 5671 2747 and provide your ideas over the phone;
- Complete and return a Guiding Bass Coast Towards 2030 survey available from all Council service centres;
- Complete the survey available at www.basscoast.vic.gov.au - the Council's website; and

Guiding Bass Coast Towards 2030 is for the whole community not just Council. Your feedback will ensure that the vision enshrines the views of the community, service providers and local businesses. It will reflect who we are now and what we want "our place" to look like in the future. It is therefore important that you participate in the process and voice your aspirations. Together we will shape the future of Bass Coast.

Further Information

If you would like more information please contact the Vision Information Desk on (03) 5671 2747 or visit the Council's website www.basscoast.vic.gov.au.